

# CIA's murderous role outrages the Filipinos

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LONDON

Publication of the Pentagon Papers that has blasted a gaping hole in the credibility of a string of American administrations has set off a secondary explosion in the Philippines, where the role of the puppet Magsaysay administration in aiding the American aggression in Vietnam has been exposed.

One of the main reports in the Papers is that by Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, in which he discusses in detail the actions taken by the CIA from before the Geneva Agreement of 1954 onward to promote suppressive counter-guerrilla warfare in Vietnam and Laos and to build up Ngo Dinh Diem as the American instrument to frustrate the Agreement. Lansdale was well-known before that in the Philippines, since he was the CIA agent who masterminded many aspects of the anti-Huk suppression campaign in the country and who groomed Ramon Magsaysay for the presidency and ran his election campaign.

In a number of the actions detailed by Lansdale in his report Filipinos who were part of the Magsaysay apparatus and with whom Lansdale had worked in the Philippines played a leading part. Magsaysay himself as honorary president, backed the setting up of an outfit initially called the Freedom Company, "a non-profit Philippine corporation," which had the assignment of recruiting Filipinos who had participated in the anti-Huk suppression for similar service in Vietnam and Laos.

After Freedom Company was organized in November 1954, it was apparently felt that its name did not sufficiently disguise its operations, so it was changed to Eastern Construction Company. (The CIA has created a maze of such "corporations" around the world, through which its espionage and subversive activities are carried on.)

As the Lansdale report states, "The head of Eastern Construction is Frisco 'Johnny' San Juan, former National Commander, Philippines Veterans Legion, and for-

mer close staff assistant to President Magsaysay (serving as Presidential Complaints and Action Commissioner directly under the President)." San Juan went on to a political career and is now a congressman from Rizal province.

Lansdale praised the almost untapped potential of Eastern Construction for unconventional warfare "which was its original mission." He wrote that "this cadre can be expanded into a wide range of counter-Communist activities, having sufficient stature in the Philippines to be able to draw on a very large segment of its trained, experienced and well-motivated manpower pool." After a few years, "It now furnishes about 500 trained, experienced Filipino technicians to the Governments of Vietnam and Laos, under the auspices of MAAG (MAP) and USOM (ICA) activities."

MAAG are the initials for Military Assistance Advisory Group, and MAP for Military Assistance Program in Vietnam; USOM stands for United States Operation Mission, and ICA for International Cooperation Administration.

The Freedom-Eastern Construction outfit was also assigned the task of running a training camp for anti-Communist Vietnamese para-military units in a hidden valley on the Clark Air Base reservation in the Philippines.

In addition the Magsaysay government agreed to operate a psychological warfare counter-guerrilla school called the Security Training Center, located at Fort McKinley on the rim of Manila. This, as the Pentagon Papers mentions, was secretly sponsored and financed by the CIA. This trained "anti-subversion" personnel for all of Southeast Asia.

Another Filipino-linked scheme

was the so-called Operation Brotherhood, which came about following a visit in 1954 to see Lansdale in Saigon by Oscar Arellano, a Filipino close to Magsaysay who was then vice president for Asia of the International Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees). Arellano came away from this visit to advocate the setting up of Operation Brotherhood, which was played up in the Philippines at the time as a semi-religious altruistic medical mission.

However, as Lansdale explains it, it was "capable of considerable expansion in socio-economic medical operations to support counter-guerrilla actions," and he says that "Washington responded warmly to the idea." According to Lansdale, the Saigon Military Mission that he then headed would "monitor the operation quietly in the background" and that "it has a measure of CIA control."

Oscar Arellano, following the publication of the Pentagon Papers issued a defensive statement claiming that "OB has always been a presidential program since the administration of President Magsaysay. OB's mission is the propagation of the conviction that all men are brothers, created by a Supreme Divinity to whom He gave His image and likeness and imbued with His spirit."

A third Filipino operation was headed by Col. Napoleon Valeriano, who was given the job of training a Presidential Guard Battalion for Ngo Dinh Diem, after having done the same for Magsaysay. Valeriano was selected, says Lansdale, for his "fine record against the Communist Huks." In the Philippines, Valeriano had commanded the most brutal and notorious of all anti-Huk units, called the "Skull Unit."

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